

## WASHINGTON LETTER.

From our Regular Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, April 11.

President Harrison may have another vacancy to fill in the Supreme Court shortly, as close friends of Justice Lamar, who has been dangerously ill for several weeks, say that he will not be able to resume his seat on the bench again, even if he should not die from the present illness. A prominent Pennsylvania lawyer, who called at the White House to present the claims of a friend to the vacant seat left on the bench of the Supreme Court by the death of the late Justice Bradley, says Mr. Harrison told him that owing to the pressure of other important matters, principally the Behring Sea negotiations, he had not taken up the question of appointing a new Justice, but would do so at the earliest possible time that he could give it the attention its importance demands.

It is well that the House, having passed the Free-Wool and the Free-Cotton-Tie and Bagging Bills, should "let up" on the tariff, and devote some time to the appropriation bills and other legislation; the other legislation is not, however, likely to include anything of national importance. The members themselves are getting awfully tired of the empty seats and galleries to which tariff speeches are made. The most notable features of the debate on the last named bill was the effort of Representative Glover of Kansas to attach an amendment providing for the free coinage of silver to the bill, which was ruled out on a point of order; Jerry Simpson's declaration that he was an out-and-out free-trader, without any ifs or ands, and the speech of Representative English of New Jersey, who, although a Democrat and a tariff-reformer, opposed the bill.

It begins to look as if our next foreign complication will be with China, which will, it is thought, be certain to recall its Minister and give our Minister his passport if the Chinese Exclusion Bill passed by the House last week becomes a law, and the chances are certainly in favor of its doing that very thing.

You do not hear as much about Congressional lobbying as in the days of Sam Ward, but at no time in the existence of the Government was there more of it than at this time. There are men here who have within a few years grown rich by means of bills lobbied through Congress for the purchase of real estate. The lobby secured the enactment of the law locating the city Post-office on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue, where they are now sinking forty-foot piles to find a solid foundation, and the outfit of that building, when erected will have to include a steam-pumping apparatus to clear the cellar of the water certain to enter whenever the Potomac River gets a little high. It is conceded that the price paid by the Government for this ground was at least three times what it could have been sold to private purchasers. Having succeeded so well with the Post-office Bill, the lobby is now working up Congressional sentiment in favor of a bill which has been introduced to spend \$500,000 to erect a new Patent Office in the same place. Think of spending that much money upon a building in a swamp, where forty-foot piles have to be used to get a foundation.

It is perhaps natural that the owners of property on Pennsylvania Avenue, who have seen the big business establishments one by one desert that thoroughfare for the higher ground of F and G Streets, and the two daily papers, which own buildings on the avenue, and the real-estate agents who expect to get fat commissions when the sales are made, should advocate the purchase by the Government of land in that vicinity, but how any Senator or Representative can honestly favor such a method of distributing public funds among a lot of men, many of whom have already become rich through similar transactions, is more than I can understand. For this or any other bill for the location of Government buildings on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue to become a law would be little short of a national crime. Quite a scandal has been unearthed by the Pension Office investigation, and it was entirely unexpected by the gentlemen conducting that investigation, inasmuch as it transformed Representative Cooper of Indiana, who is one of the principal prosecutors, into a defendant. It was proven, in fact admitted by the culprit, that a man named Hersey, who has been Mr. Cooper's private secretary, but who will hardly continue in that position, had made use of Mr. Cooper's signature to obtain information about the status of pension applications which he sold to pension attorneys. No one believes that Mr. Cooper was cognizant of this, but all the same it places him in an unpleasant predicament.

Absenteeism is growing worse in the House as the time for making Congressional dominions grows nearer. Think of more than one-third of the members being absent when a vote was taken on the bill placing cotton ties and bagging on the free list. The vote was 167 to 46, three Democrats voting with the Republicans against the bill.

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